

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims replaces all prior listings and versions of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Please amend claims 1, 4, 5, 15 and 21 so that the claims read as follows:

1. (Currently amended) An apparatus for facilitating authentication of a mobile station to communicate in a communication system, wherein the communication system includes a network part including plurality of access network portions and a core network portion, the plurality of access network portions being coupled to the core network portion, a plurality of authenticators coupled to the core network portion, each authenticator being associated with one of the plurality of access network portions, ~~at least one mobile station being operable to communicate by way of at least one selected access network portion of the plurality of access network portions once authenticated through interaction with a selected authenticator associated with the selected access network portion,~~ the apparatus comprising:

an identifier coupled to the mobile station and the core network portion,
said identifier being formed of a proxy located at an access network portion selected from said plurality of access network portions, said proxy for converting a protocol used within an access network portion into a signaling protocol used within the core network portion,

said identifier for detecting generation of ~~to receive~~ an authentication request in accordance with said access network protocol, the authentication request requesting authentication by the mobile station through interaction with ~~the~~ a selected authenticator associated with the selected access network portion, ~~said identifier being~~ used for identifying indicia associated with the selected authenticator, for generating a signaling protocol message in accordance with said signaling protocol, and for inserting the identified indicia into the generated signaling protocol message, the indicia being used to facilitate delivery of the authentication request to the selected authenticator and to specify a type of authentication procedure to be performed, ~~said identifier being formed of a proxy located at the selected network portion.~~

2. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the selected authenticator is coupled to the core access network, the selected authenticator having an address associated therewith, and wherein the indicia identified by said identifier and used to facilitate delivery of the authentication request to the selected authenticator comprises address indicia representative of the address associated with the selected authenticator.

3. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the selected authenticator authenticates the mobile station through effectuation of a selected authentication method, and wherein the indicia identified by said identifier and used to facilitate delivery of the authentication request comprises authentication-method indicia representative of the selected authentication method.

4. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, ~~further comprising at least a second access network, wherein a first authenticator, coupled to the core network portion, is associated with the first access network portion and at least a second authenticator, also coupled to the core network portion, is associated with the at least second access network portion, and wherein the indicia identified by said identifier identifies which of the first and the least second~~ plurality of authenticators to which the authentication request is to be delivered.

5. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the indicia identifying which of the ~~first and at least second~~ plurality of authenticators that the authentication request is to be delivered to is identified by said identifier responsive to identification through either the ~~first or at least second~~ selected access network portions through which the authentication request is made.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Previously amended) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the communication system utilizes a text-based signaling protocol scheme, and wherein the request message generated by said request message forwarder comprises a text-based signaling protocol message.

9. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 8 wherein the request message generated by said request message forwarder comprises an indicia field, the indicia field populated with values identified by said identifier to be associated with the authenticator.

10. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 9 wherein the values identified by said identifier and populated in the indicia field comprise values representative of an address associated with the selected authenticator.

11. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 9 wherein the values identified by said identifier and populated in the indicia field comprise values representative of an authentication scheme pursuant to which the selected authenticator authenticates the mobile station.

12. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said identifier is positioned at the mobile station.

13. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the mobile station is operable to originate a communication session there from and wherein said identifier identifies the indicia pursuant to origination by the mobile station of the communication station.

14. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the mobile station is operable to initiate a registration procedure and wherein said identifier identifies the indicia pursuant to the registration procedure initiated by the mobile station.

15. (Currently amended) A method of authenticating a mobile station to communicate in a communication system having a network part including plurality of a access network portions and a core network portion, the plurality of access network portions being coupled to the core network portion, ~~a plurality of authenticators coupled to the core network portion, each authenticator being associated with one of the plurality of access network portions, and the communication system having a~~ said mobile station operable to communicate by way of at least one selected access network portion of the plurality of access network portions once authenticated ~~through interaction with a selected authenticator associated with the selected access network portion, the method of facilitating authentication of the mobile station to communicate in the communication system, comprising the steps of:~~

detecting generation of an authentication request in accordance with an access network protocol, the authentication request requesting authentication by the mobile station through interaction with the an authenticator selected from a plurality of authenticators coupled to the core network portion, each authenticator being associated with one of the plurality of access network portions, the selected authenticator being associated with a selected access network portion; and

identifying indicia associated with the selected authenticator;

generating a signaling protocol message in accordance with said
access network protocol; and
inserting the identified indicia into the generated signaling protocol
message, the indicia being used to facilitate delivery of the authentication request
to the selected authenticator and to specify a type, ~~said step of authentication~~
~~procedure to identifying being performed by a proxy located at the selected access~~
~~network portion.~~

16. (Previously presented) The method of claim 15 wherein the indicia associated with the selected authenticator and identified during said operation of identifying comprises indicia representative of address indicia associated with the selected authenticator.

17. (Previously presented) The method of claim 15 wherein the selected authenticator authenticates the mobile station through effectuation of a selected authentication method, and wherein the indicia associated with the selected authenticator identified during said operation of identifying comprises authentication-method indicia representative of the selected authentication method.

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Previously presented) The method of claim 15 further comprising the operation of forwarding a request message representative of the authentication request, the request message including the indicia associated with the authenticator.

20. (Previously presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the request message forwarded during said operation of forwarding comprises a signaling protocol message containing an indicia field containing values representative of the indicia identified during said operation of identifying.

21. (Currently amended) A communication system comprising:
a network part including a plurality of access network portions and a core network portion, the plurality of access network portions being coupled to the core network portion,

a plurality of authenticators coupled to the core network portion, each authenticator being associated with one of the plurality of access network portions,

at least one mobile station operable to communicate by way of at least one selected access network portion of the plurality of access network portions once authenticated through interaction with a selected authenticator associated with the selected access network portion, and

an apparatus for facilitating authentication of the mobile station to communicate in the communication system, said apparatus including

an identifier coupled to the mobile station and the core network portion ,

said identifier being formed of a proxy located at the selected network access

~~portion, said proxy for converting a protocol used within an access network~~
~~portion into receive a signaling protocol used within the core network portion,~~
~~said identifier for detecting generation of an authentication request in~~
~~accordance with said access network protocol, the authentication request~~
~~requesting authentication by the mobile station through interaction with the~~
~~selected authenticator, said identifier for identifying indicia associated with the~~
~~selected authenticator, for generating a signaling protocol message in accordance~~
~~with said signaling protocol, and for inserting the identified indicia into the~~
~~generated signaling protocol message, the indicia being used to facilitate delivery~~
~~of the authentication request to the selected authenticator; and to specify a type~~
~~said identifier being formed of a proxy located at the selected access network~~
~~portion, wherein said proxy of which said identifier is formed comprises an~~
~~authentication procedure to be performed request detector and a request message~~
~~forwarder, said authentication request detector detecting the authentication~~
~~request and said request message forwarder forwarding a request message~~
~~representative of the authentication request, the request message including the~~
~~indicia associated with the selected authenticator.~~